

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 /091 W
-----019280 221258Z /41

R 220807Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8373
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3430

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS LE
FCBJ: CONDOLENCE CALL ON PRESIDENT FRANGIEH

1. MY WIFE AND I, ACCOMPANIED BY SENIOR FSL MAMARY, PAID
CONDOLENCE CALL ON FRANGIEHS AT ZGHORTA MORNING JUNE 21.
FRANGIEH HOUSE WAS CROWDED WITH VISITORS AND FRANGIEH HIMSELF,
TOGETHER WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF LEADING ZGHORTAWI FAMILIES,
(KARAMS, BOULOSES, MOUAWADS AND DUWEIHYS) WAS CLOSETED WITH
RELIGIOUS DELEGATION LED BY SYRIAN CATHOLIC PATRIARCH
MAXIMOS HAKIM AND SENIOR MARONITE CLERGY. THEY HAD BEEN
DELEGATED BY CATHOLIC HIERARCHY TO CONVEY TO FRANGIEH PLEA
FOR RESTRAINT.

2. I FOUND FRANGIEH STILL IN VERY EMOTIONAL STATE AND HIS EYES
FILLED WITH TEARS WHEN I MENTIONED HIS GRANDDAUGHTER,
WHO HAD BEEN PET OF HOUSEHOLD WHEN WE STAYED WITH FRANGIEHS
LAST SUMMER. MRS. FRANGIEH WAS IN SIMILAR TEARFUL STATE
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WHILE EVERYONE ELSE SEEMED PRETTY NORMAL. TOWN OF ZGHORTA
LOOKED ITS USUAL UNKEMPT SELF WITH NO EVIDENCE ARMED MILITIAS
OR PREPARATIONS FOR COMBAT. MAMARY POINTED OUT, HOWEVER,
THAT MEMBERS OF FRANGIEH FAMILY, EXCEPT FOR MRS. FRANGIEH, WERE
NOT WEARING MOURNING AND SAID THIS WAS SIGN THEY WERE WAITING
UNTIL REVENGE HAD BEEN METED OUT TO GEMAYELS.

3. DURING MY MEETING WITH FRANGIEH FORMER MINISTER OF PTT RENE MOUAWAD DID MOST OF THE TALKING. HE DESCRIBED MASSACRE AS RESULT OF POLITICAL DECISION TAKEN BY PHALANGE LEADERSHIP AND SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEIR INTENT WAS TO GET TONY FRANGIEH AND NOT ANYONE ELSE AS SOME PEOPLE WERE CLAIMING. TONY AND FAMILY AND HIS DRIVER HAD BEEN FIRST PEOPLE KILLED. HE AND OTHERS DENIED THAT THE PEOPLE OF BECHARRE HAD BEEN INVOLVED BUT NOTED THAT PHALANGE MILITARY LEADER FOR THAT REGION HAPPENED TO BE FROM BECHARRE AND HAD PARTICIPATED IN ACTION. I ASKED FRANGIEH WHAT WAS COMING NEXT AND HE SAID GOD ONLY KNEW. HIS DAUGHTER SONIA TOLD MY WIFE THAT FRANGIEH HAD COUNSELED CALM AND HAD PREVENTED PEOPLE FROM GOING ON KILLING SPREE WHICH EVERYONE HAD EXPECTED.

4. I ASKED IF FRANGIEH'S DEMAND THAT PHALANGE EITHER TURN IN THEIR MEMBERSHIP CARDS AND WEAPONS OR GET OUT OF NORTHERN LEBANON HAD HAD EFFECT. FRANGIEH SEEMED SURPRISED BY QUESTION AND SAID HE ASSUMED I HAD SEEN NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF PEOPLE TURNING IN THEIR CARDS AND WEAPONS. (I NEVERTHELESS QUESTION WHETHER THERE HAS BEEN ANYTHING LIKE 100 PERCENT COMPLIANCE WITH HIS DEMAND, WHICH HAS INCIDENTALLY COST HIM CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY BECAUSE HE ASKED MARONITE CLERGY TO PASS MESSAGE TO THEIR CONGREGATIONS. THIS WAS REGARDED AS UNWARRANTED INFRINGEMENT OF CHURCH'S NEUTRALITY.)

5. ON WAY BACK WE WERE FORCED TO TAKE DETOUR AT VILLAGE
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OF KALAMOUN BECAUSE SOMEONE HAD PLANTED A BOMB AT FILLING STATION IN THE TOWN. MY ARMOR-PLATED MUSHAMATIC CHRYSLER BELCHFIRE BOILED OVER IN THE RESULTING TRAFFIC JAM. SOMEBODY OUGHT TO DESIGN A RELIABLE ARMORED CAR FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION.

6. COMMENT. I DO NOT KNOW AT THIS POINT WHAT ONE CAN EXPECT TO HAPPEN. IF GOL AND SYRIANS WERE TO TAKE THE TRADITIONAL MEASURE OF SURROUNDING ZGHORTA AND CONTROLLING EGRESS AND INGRESS THEY COULD PREVENT ANY SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY OPERATION BY FRANGIEHS, WHOSE MANPOWER RESOURCES ARE LIMITED IN ANY EVENT. GIVEN SYRIAN SYMPATHY FOR FRANGIEH, I DOUBT THIS WILL HAPPEN. SUSPECT THAT, GIVEN MANPOWER LIMITATIONS MENTIONED ABOVE, FRANGIEHS WILL CONFINE SELVES TO TRYING TO ARRANGE ASSASSINATION OF SUITABLE GEMAYELS WHILE ALSO SEEKING TO ELIMINATE PHALANGE PRESENCE IN NORTHERN LEBANON. I WOULD NOT EXPECT THEM TO TRY ANY SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY OPERATIONS OUTSIDE NORTHERN LEBANON. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AT SOME POINT TRADITIONAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GEMAYELS AND FRANGIEHS CAN BE ARRANGED BUT CERTAINLY FRANGIEH IS NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANYTHING LIKE THAT AT PRESENT.

7. FINAL MEANING OF EHDEN MASSACRE FOR FUTURE OF

LEBANON REMAINS UNCERTAIN. WE ARE REPORTING SEPARATELY DCM
LANE'S VIEW THAT PERHAPS THE END RESULT MAY NOT BE AS BAD AS WE
FEARED INITIALLY. TONY WAS AN UNSAVORY CHARACTER AND THERE ARE
NOT A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING OVER HIS DISAPPEARANCE
FROM THE SCENE. IT IS THE KILLING OF HIS DAUGHTER WHICH HAS
GENERATED OUTRAGE AND SHOCK. IF NOW BACHIR GEMAYEL DISAPPEARS
SIMILARLY THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO WILL SLEEP EASIER AT NIGHT.
THIS IS NOT WAY TO RUN A COUNTRY, THOUGH, AND THE
FACT THAT CHRISTIANS ARE REGRESSING TO FEUDAL STATE IN WHICH
THEY LIVED BEFORE 1860 HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR TERRITORIAL
INTEGRITY. AS RENE MOUAWAD SAID DURING CONDOLENCE CALL, THIS
ACTION IS LEADING NOT TO THE PARTITION OF LEBANON BUT TO
ITS DISINTEGRATION (EFFRITEMENT).

PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MURDER, CONDOLENCE MESSAGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT03430
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780260-0730
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780632/aaaabbnc.tel
Line Count: 136
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bda9bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2254123
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONDOLENCE CALL ON PRESIDENT FRANHGEIH
TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bda9bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014